



Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy

Statement of intent

Toddington Childcare & Forest School is committed to working closely with children, parents and carers and the community to ensure the rights and safety of children in our care and to give them the very best start in life.

Aims

Our aims are to:

- create an environment within our setting which encourages each child to develop their own positive self-image, regardless of race, religion, culture or home background;
- help children to establish and sustain positive relationships within their families, with peers and with other adults;
- encourage children to develop a sense of autonomy and independence;
- enable children to have the self-confidence and vocabulary to resist inappropriate approaches;
- to work in partnership with parents and carers to build a shared understanding of and commitment to the welfare of all our children.

To achieve these aims

- We ensure all staff, students and volunteers are trained to understand our Safeguarding policies and procedures through our Induction programme, regular discussion at staff training meetings and via our robust staff safeguarding training programme. Policies are circulated regularly at staff meetings and are accessible on our website www.toddingtonchildcare.org.uk. Our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is reviewed regularly in line with any Legislative and/or Statutory Guidance changes and at least annually by the Setting Manager and our Parent Management Committee. Our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is accessible to all on our website.
- All staff have an up-to-date knowledge of Safeguarding practice through a robust programme of annual online e-learning, virtual classroom and face to face training. All staff as a minimum complete Level 2 Safeguarding Children,

FGM, Prevent and Safer Sleeping for Babies training certificates via the Safeguarding Bedfordshire multi agency training provider for the Safeguarding Children Partnerships in Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire and Luton annually. Our staff Leadership team complete Level 3 Safeguarding Children, FGM, Prevent and relevant Designated Safeguarding Lead and annual update training. In addition to this, our Setting Manager also attends face to face 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' training and completes annual Safer Recruitment training, all booked through Safeguarding Bedfordshire's multi agency training provider.

- All staff Safeguarding training records are recorded on staff Personal Development Plans and are stored electronically, which is reviewed monthly by the Setting Manager/DSL and shared with staff to ensure training is kept up to date.
- All staff are allocated their individual Lanyards with photographic identity, their role(s) and level of qualification. On the reverse of each staff lanyard, is information and contact details for the LADO and Integrated Front door. In addition to this, each lanyard states emergency services telephone numbers and our full business address, telephone number and location via 'What 3 Words.' Our staff lanyards are blue to match our uniform for children to easily identify staff.
- We also issue authorised visitor temporary lanyards to wear during their visit, which are colour coded green for a DBS checked visitor's and red for a visitor with no DBS. Visitors are supervised at all times.
- We comply with the procedures laid down by the Local Safeguarding Partners.
- We have a copy of the publication "What to do if you're worried a child is being abused" displayed in our staff rooms and a helpline for parents to call displayed on parent and carer notice boards.
- All members of staff know the settings procedures for recording and reporting concerns and incidents.
- In consultation with parents and carers, we are able to refer children for additional help through Early Help Assessment (EHA) and multi-agency safeguarding arrangements (MASA).
- We notify our registration authority (Ofsted) of any incident or accident and any changes in our arrangements which affect the well-being of children.
- We have procedures for contacting our Local Authority Children's Services Integrated Front Door team for any safeguarding concerns with children.
- If a report is to be made to the authorities, we take advice from Central Bedfordshire Children's Services Integrated Front Door team in deciding whether it is safe to inform the child's parents and carers at the same time.

Methods:

Staffing and volunteering

- Our Setting Manager Rachel Turner is our settings named Designated Safeguarding Lead. Marisa Perrini and Josh Turner are our setting's Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads. Marisa Perrini is our Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead for 'Out of Term' Clubs. Our Setting Manager co-ordinates our whole settings Safeguarding practice and training with the support of our Parent Management Committee.
- We provide adequate and appropriate staffing to meet the needs of all children, meeting statutory staff:child ratio's for each of our Early Years Rooms. In our Panda Room we work on a ratio of 1:3 for our under 2's, in our Zebra Room we work on a ratio of 1:4 for our 2-3's and in our Giraffe Room we work on a minimum ratio of 1:8 for our 3-4's, however in the main 1:6 to facilitate additional support for children with SEND needs.
- All children are allocated a Key Person as part of Safeguarding and Welfare requirements and we offer each family a Home Visit before their child starts.
- All staff have a duty of care to maintain the well-being of all children.
- It is made clear to all applicants for any positions held within the setting that the position is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- Applicants are informed of the need to carry out Enhanced DBS checks and the taking up of two full and relevant satisfactory current employment, training provider or education setting references before positions can be confirmed as part of our Safer Recruitment practice. Where applications are unsuccessful because of information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge the information provided.
- We record information about staff qualifications and obtain full photographic identity documents in addition to all other safer recruitment processes being completed. This includes recording;
 - the Disclosure and Barring Service reference number;
 - Date the disclosure was obtained and details of who obtained it.
 - DBS Update Service Reference
 - Staff are continually renewed annually on the DBS Update service by Toddington Childcare & Forest School and these are reviewed regularly by the Setting Manager/DSL.
- To promote Safer Recruitment, as an Early Years provider, we obtain current employment, training provider or education setting references for any prospective staff in accordance with the revised Early Years Foundation Stage Framework September 2025.
- We inform all staff that they are expected to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders or reprimands and warnings which may affect their suitability to work with children (whether received before or during their employment with us).

- Volunteers do not work unsupervised.
- We abide by the Protection of Children Act and the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 requirements in respect of any person who is dismissed from our employment, or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have led to dismissal for reasons of safeguarding children concerns.
- We have a visitor's book recording the details of visitors to the setting.
- The door to the main play area is kept locked at all times during each session so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.
- Our main entrance gate can only be opened to visitors by appropriate qualified staff answering our inter-com system, allowing identification before access is permitted.
- We take steps to ensure children are not photographed or filmed on video for any other purpose than to record their development or their participation in events organised by our setting. Parents and carers sign a consent form at Registration and have access to records holding visual images of their children.
- Only the Setting Manager is able to carry their mobile phone when necessary. All other staff must keep mobile phones in their bags, designated staff room area or hand them into the office if awaiting an emergency call, including any other devices with imaging and sharing capabilities. (Please see Mobile Phone Policy).

Disciplinary Action

Where a member of staff or a volunteer is dismissed from the setting or internally disciplined because of misconduct relating to a child, we notify the Department of Health administrators so that the name may be included on the List for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults.

Training

All of our staff leadership team receive advanced training on safeguarding issues. We seek out training opportunities for all staff in our setting to ensure they are able to recognise the signs and symptoms of possible physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse or neglect. We ensure that all staff know the procedures for reporting and recording their concerns in the setting. Our staff leadership team attend Designated Safeguarding Lead training and the Setting Manager also updates 'Safer Recruitment' and 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' training annually. Safeguarding is discussed at every monthly staff meeting and minuted. We have regular Safeguarding training during staff meetings through discussion and knowledge quizzes. All staff safeguarding training in Safeguarding Children Level 2 and 3, Prevent (Radicalisation and Extremism), FGM and Safer Sleeping for Babies is updated annually via the Safeguarding Bedfordshire training provider portal 'Enable'. All staff training records are recorded electronically by the Setting Manager and shared with staff regularly and on Staff Personal Development Plans to ensure all training is kept up to date. All staff are provided

with a lanyard which provides details and relevant telephone numbers to access Children's Services Integrated Front Door and our Local Authority Designated Officer. All staff are aware of all Safeguarding Children Useful contact numbers which are displayed in the main office and each designated staff room notice board.

Planning

The layout of our rooms allow for constant supervision. Where children need to spend time away from the rest of the group, e.g care giving needs, the door to the accessible changing area is left ajar and visible to other staff.

Curriculum

- We introduce key elements of Safeguarding children into our Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum or activity planning so that children can develop an understanding of why and how to keep safe (e.g. saying no and road safety).
- We create within our setting a culture of value and respect for each individual.
- We ensure that this is carried out in a way that is appropriate for the ages and developmental stages of our children.

Complaints

- We ensure that all parents and carers know how to complain about staff or volunteers within the setting, which may include an allegation against a member of staff.
- We have a Whistle Blowing Policy and procedures to follow for allegations made against a member of staff which is accessible on our website.
- We notify Ofsted and our LADO Local Authority Designated Officer when we receive an allegation made about a member of staff, in line with our policies and procedures.
- We follow all the disclosure and recording procedures when investigating an allegation that a member of staff or volunteer has abused a child as if it were an allegation of abuse by any other person (see Procedure in the event of an allegation against a member of staff).

If we suspect abuse

We are committed to responding promptly and appropriately to all incidents or concerns of abuse that may occur and work with the statutory agencies in accordance with the procedures that are set out in 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' (HMG 2015).

- We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms - physical, sexual, emotional and neglect.

- When children are suffering from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or experiencing neglect, this may be demonstrated through:
 - Significant changes in behaviour;
 - Deterioration in their well-being;
 - Their comments which may give concern or the things they say (direct or indirect disclosure);
 - Changes in their appearance, their behaviour, or their play;
 - Unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect; and
 - Any reason to suspect abuse outside the setting.
- We take into account factors affecting parental capacity, such as social exclusion, domestic violence, parent's drug or alcohol abuse, mental or physical illness or a parent's learning disability.
- We are aware of other factors that affect children's vulnerability such as; abuse of children with SEND; fabricated or induced illness; child abuse linked to beliefs in spirit possession; sexual exploitation of children, such as through internet abuse; and female genital mutilation; that may affect, or may have affected children and young people using our provision.
- We also make ourselves aware that some children and young people are affected by gang activity including County Lines drug activity, by complex, multiple or organised abuse, through forced marriage or honour based violence or may be victims of child trafficking. While this may be less likely to affect young children in our care, we may become aware of any of these factors affecting older children and young people who we may come into contact with our families.
- Where we believe that a child in our care or that is known to us may be affected by any of these factors, we follow the procedures below for reporting child protection concerns.
- Where such evidence is apparent, the child's Key Person makes a dated record of the details of the concern and discusses what to do with the Setting Manager/Designated Safeguarding Lead or member of staff who is the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead in the Setting Manager's absence. The information is recorded electronically on individual child safeguarding records.
- We refer concerns to our Local Authority Children's Services Integrated Front Door team and co-operate fully in any subsequent investigation. NB in some cases this may mean the police or another agency identified by the Safeguarding Partners.
- We take care not to influence the outcome either through the way we speak to children or by asking leading questions of children.
- We take account of the need to protect young people aged 16-19 as defined by the Children Act 1989. This may include students or school children on work placement, young employees or young parents. Where abuse is suspected, we follow the procedure for reporting any other child protection concerns. The views of the young person will always be taken into account, but the setting may override the young person's refusal to consent to share information if it feels that it is necessary to prevent a crime from being committed or intervene

where one may have been, or to prevent harm to a child or adult. Sharing confidential information without consent is done only where not sharing could be harmful to a child.

Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures

Where a child makes comments to a member of staff that give cause for concern (disclosure) or a member of staff observes signs that give cause for concern, such as significant changes in behaviour; deterioration in general well-being; unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect; that member of staff:

- Listens to the children, offers reassurance and gives assurances that she or he will take action;
- Does not question the child;
- Gives reassurance that she or he will take action.
- Makes written record that forms an objective record of the observation or disclosure that includes: the date and time of the observation or the disclosure; the exact words spoken by the child as far as possible; the name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with the date and time; and the names of any other person present at the time.
- These records are signed and dated and stored electronically in a child's safeguarding file, which is kept securely and confidentially.
- The member of staff acting as the 'designated person' is informed of the issue at the earliest opportunity.
- Where the Local Safeguarding Partners stipulates the process for recording and sharing concerns, we include those procedures alongside this procedure and follow the steps set down by the Safeguarding Partners.

Making a referral to Local Authority Children's Services

- We follow the procedures of Central Bedfordshire Local Authority Safeguarding Partners. A copy of 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' (HMG 2015) can be found on our notice board.
- It is the welfare of the child which is paramount and this is at the forefront of all of our actions. We are aware that many children have suffered because of miscommunication between agencies and that the government guidance now encourages the full sharing of information. We shall therefore use our professional judgement in sharing information with the agencies that 'need to know', being open and honest with parents and children as to why we feel we need to share the information.
- Full records of conversations will be maintained when any referrals or discussions are held with any other agencies or with parents prior to a referral.

Informing parents

We will always aim to involve parents in any referrals before they are made. However, if a suspicion of abuse is recorded and the child is considered at risk, an immediate referral will be made to the Central Bedfordshire Integrated Front Door team and we will take their advice on informing parents.

Liaising with other agencies

- We work within the Local Safeguarding Partners guidelines.
- We have a current version of 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' available for parents and staff and ensure that all staff are familiar with what they need to do if they have concerns.
- We have procedures for contact with the Local Authority regarding child protection issues, including maintaining a list of names, addresses and telephone number of Family Partners and Social Workers, to ensure that it is easy in the event of an emergency, for the setting and Children's Services to work well together.
- We notify the registration authority (Ofsted) of any incident or accident and any changes in our arrangements which may affect the wellbeing of children or where an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff (whether the allegations relate to harm or abuse committed on our premises or elsewhere). Notifications to Ofsted are made as soon as is reasonably practicable, but at the latest within 14 days of the allegations being made.
- Contact details for the local National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) are also kept Tel: 0808 800 5000.

Confidentiality

All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. If there are concerns within the setting it is important that the Setting Manager is made aware of them. However, children will work with a number of different adults in the setting and should also be made aware of that if concerns are raised about an aspect of well-being of a child. Any information shared with external agencies is done under the guidance of the Safeguarding Partners.

Support to families

- Toddington Childcare & Forest School will make every effort to build up trusting and supportive relationships between families, staff and volunteers in the group. We offer every new family a 'Home Visit' prior to their child starting at Toddington Childcare & Forest School together with information on health,

allergies, family background and traditions, individual needs and interests and any information on support that may be needed for the child or their family.

- Confidential records kept on a child will be fully accessible to the child's parents or carers if appropriate and safe to do so under the guidance of the Safeguarding Partners.
- All records will be kept by the setting only as long as a child remains with us.
- Toddington Childcare & Forest School will continue to welcome the child and the family whilst investigations are being made in relation to abuse in the home situation.
- With the proviso that the care and safety of the child must always be paramount, Toddington Childcare & Forest School will do all in its power to support and work with the child's family.

The legal framework for this policy is

Primary Legislation

- The Children Act (1989 s47)
- The Children Act (Every Child Matters (2004)
- Childcare Act 2006
- Protection of Children Act (1999)
- The Children and Families Act 2014
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)

Secondary Legislation

- Sexual Offences Act (2003)
- Criminal Justice and Court Services Act (2015)
- Equality Act (2010)
- Data Protection Act (1998) Non Statutory Guidance

Further guidance

- This policy meets requirements relating to Safeguarding and Welfare in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The Education Inspection Framework
- Working together to Safeguard Children (HMG 2026)
- Prevent Duty Guidance 2023
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024
- The United Nations convention on the Rights of the Child 1992
- What to do if you're Worried a Child is Being Abused (HMG 2015)
- Statutory guidance on making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under section 11 of the Children Act 2004
- Safeguarding practitioners information sharing advice (HMG 2018)

This policy was accepted at a Committee Meeting of Toddington Childcare held in March 2026 and is reviewed in line with any Legislative and Statutory Guidance changes.

Signed on behalf of Toddington Childcare & Forest School

Sarah Malcolm

Chair to the committee of Toddington Childcare & Forest School